DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/OCO/MR

REVIEWED BY [redacted] DATE: 12/23/81

RDS ☐ or YRS ☐ DXE ☐ [redacted]

TS AUTH [redacted]

END [redacted]

DECLASSIFY [redacted]

RELEASE [redacted]

PA or FOI EXEMPTIONS

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proceedings, seized a loudspeaker and urged the stunned bystanders to be calm. He directed assistance to the injured and as they were being carried away by ambulance, informed the public that ballotting would continue in all but the one station which had been wrecked by the explosion. Voting continued without pause, some of the voters actually picking themselves out of the gutter where they had been blown by the blast to resume their places in line.

Quang Tri: The enemy mounted a very strong campaign against the election in this province, and almost certainly would have done more if he had the capability or if GVN security preparations were less adequate. Enemy initiated incidents increased significantly the month preceding the election, especially in the field of terrorism. There were 61 abductions and assassinations, primarily of village and hamlet officials; 20 incidents of mine detonations or mines discovered along major routes of communication; and numerous propaganda incidents; as well as the successful attack on Trieu Phong District Headquarters on 12 August 1967.

Enemy incidents began early on 3 September and continued throughout the day. At 0100, Co Luy outpost was mortared, and Province Headquarters, in the heart of Quang Tri City, was mortared about three hours later. There were nine other mortar, artillery, or rocket attacks against military installations, district headquarters, and towns; the most significant being the artillery and rocket attack against Dong Ha which began at 0900 and continued sporadically throughout the day. There were also five incidents of mortar attacks against polling places, one mine detonated at a polling place, one sniper incident at a polling place, and several reports of enemy small arms fire against people trying to leave their hamlets to vote.

As the 84.6 per cent turnout indicates, security preparations enabled almost all people desiring to vote to do so. Even at Dong Ha, voting resumed as fires were quenched and the attack slackened in the afternoon, and most people were able to vote after the hour for closing the polls was extended from 1600 to 1800 hours.

Dinh Tuong: The Viet Cong anti-election campaign was intense and vicious. Fifty or more people are dead and close to one hundred wounded as a result of VC efforts to dissuade the people from voting. They blew up an ambulance as it returned to Cai Lay Friday morning loaded with civilian passengers who had hitched a ride when their buses could not negotiate a mine hole. Thirteen were killed, and 23 were wounded. They mortared My Tho for the first time in the war early Sunday morning, killing one ARVN soldier and wounding three others. The target was the 7th Division Headquarters, but rounds also fell in the street in front of the Provincial Hospital and in the compound of the local Catholic Church. They exploded a grenade trap in the Cho Cuu (Old Market) section of My Tho seriously wounding 4 adults and 3 children, all civilians. They mortared Vinh Kim, Cai Be, Giao Duc, and Ba Dua towns during the daylight hours of Sunday morning, causing civilian casualties in all places. They blew a grenade

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in Thanh Phu RD area, killing one civilian and wounding four others. And they shelled and otherwise attacked patrols, posts, and GVN offices up and down Highway #4 throughout Saturday night and Sunday morning, causing military casualties to both Vietnamese and American forces.

Remarkably, all of this did not deter the people from voting. If anything, it seemed to stiffen their resolve. In Vinh Kim, at the height of the mortar and rifle grenade attack, the District VIS cadre in their Tri-Lambretta drove through the town broadcasting to the populace, telling them to remain calm, to stay indoors until the attack ended, but come out and vote afterward. Five minutes after the attack, the lines in front of the town's polling place were longer than ever. Tragically, an old woman was killed by a mortar round as she was going to vote. In My Tho on Sunday afternoon, a grenade trap exploded in the Cho Cuu section, wounding seven and frightening the many people who live in this crowded area. Five minutes after the attack, the VIS was on the scene, broadcasting election materials and urging people not to let terrorism deter them from voting. In My Tho on Sunday morning hundreds of Catholics jammed into the local church for morning mass before going to the polls -- despite the fact that an unexploded 82mm mortar round lay in the church compound where it fell during the night. The quiet resolve of local people to demonstrate their support of freedom was evident everywhere. Their courage was abundant.

BUNKER